

United States Senator

BOB BENNETT

Utah

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BENNETT BOOSTS PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE FUNDING TO \$1.1 BILLION, KEY TO MEETING UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH OF HIGH-TECH INDUSTRY

*Senator also secures over \$10 million for cybercrime
prevention and intellectual property protection*

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Senator Bob Bennett (R-Utah), chairman of the Senate Republican High-Tech Task Force, today praised Congress' decision to grant his request increasing funding for the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) and vital critical infrastructure and intellectual property protection programs.

As chairman of the Senate Republican High-Tech Task Force, Bennett has made it a priority to ensure that the PTO has the tools necessary to handle a 21st century workload. Under Bennett's leadership, as part of the measure approved today the Task Force was successful in increasing funding levels for the PTO to \$1.38 billion, approximately \$133.7 million over the original House version of the bill. Bennett noted that underfunding the PTO would have dramatically delayed the development of new technologies by delaying action on more than 65,000 patents until at least 2002.

"In recent years, the high-tech industry has been the premier engine of job growth in this country," Bennett said. "A well-staffed, efficient Patent and Trademark Office is essential to keep that engine running. It is in our best economic interests to do everything we can to encourage invention, innovation and investment. Improvements at the PTO are important parts of that effort. I'm pleased my colleagues recognize the importance of this funding."

Due to increased innovation in everything from health care to manufacturing, and agriculture to aerospace, Bennett noted the high-tech community is the largest portion of the population applying for and receiving patents each year. Since 1992, the agency's workload has increased by more than 75 percent. This year alone, trademark applications are up 40 percent over 1999 levels.

As chairman of the High-Tech Task Force, Senator Bennett has also been instrumental in recognizing the need for increased funding for a number of programs aimed at preventing, investigating and prosecuting intellectual property crimes.

In this regard, Bennett secured \$3.97 million for 50 new positions at the FBI, including 25 attorneys, to launch an initiative to investigate violations of federal copyright laws protecting software applications, and to vigorously pursue violations of federal copyright law. Also approved as part of this effort, \$612,000 in funding will go to the FBI's Intellectual Property Rights Center to improve intelligence and analysis related to intellectual property. Eight new positions, including two FBI agents, will be established through this funding.

Bennett is also happy to announce that the National Infrastructure Protection Center (NIPC) will receive \$5.5 million in funding for next year. NIPC is the FBI operation to which all referrals involving critical infrastructure protection violations are referred. This funding was set aside for NIPC for the FBI's field computer crime intrusion squads and computer response teams.

Increased funding for the Patent and Trademark Office, NIPC and other cybercrime and intellectual property protection initiatives are included in the conference report to accompany the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2001 which passed the House of Representatives yesterday and the Senate today. The bill will now go to the White House for presidential signature.

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